News Release
For More Information, Contact:
Sally Pick, member, Montague Energy Committee, 413-367-0082, SJP@crocker.com
November 24, 2008
For Immediate Release

Save Energy, Save Money, Win a Furnace!

Montague, MA—November 24, 2008-- On Saturday, December 6, Montague residents have a chance to learn from an energy expert how to keep their home or apartment warm this winter and lower their heating costs. And, any Montague resident attending this Home Energy Conservation Workshop will have a chance to win a fabulous door prize—a free, installed forced hot air furnace—donated by Lennox Industries, a leading manufacturer of innovative, high efficiency furnaces.

Here's what Energy Consultant and Home Weatherization Trainer, David Knowles, will be talking about at the workshop: "When we talk to people about things they can do to reduce their heating bill and stay more comfortable at the same time, we like to point out that their choices range from low/no cost strategies that are simple, immediate, and don't require a lot of tools or specialized material, to big-ticket home improvements (new heating systems, additional insulation) that usually involve a contractor and significant cost. Some choices are well worth the expense and effort; others may not be such a good idea. We also try to explain what the "advanced diagnostic audit" is and why it might be a very good idea.

And here's the other big payoff. People whose houses have been carefully weatherized generally report that their home is more comfortable. The floors perhaps feel a little warmer, or the cold air that comes in around the kitchen door is gone, or the moisture that used to stay on the windows clears up. Professional weatherization teams also emphasize safety. They make sure that carbon monoxide is not building up, and that all the combustion appliances in the home work properly."

He'll also talk about how the state has some programs, available to any resident regardless of household income, to help pay for the big-ticket improvements. For example, MassSave has a HEAT Loan Program for qualifying residents that allows people to pay for energy efficiency upgrades with a 0% loan of up to 7 years. Residents can cover the costs of insulation, high efficiency heating systems and water heaters, Energy Star replacement windows, and duct sealing and insulation.

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Chris Mason, chair of the newly formed Montague Energy Committee, explains, "The Energy Committee recognizes that this will be a difficult winter for many of Montague's residents who struggle to stay warm. The committee has identified education and helping people weatherize their houses as high priorities for its work.

It's with the generosity of our neighbors that we're able to hold this workshop. David Knowles is donating his expertise and time, the Senior Center is donating the meeting space, Franklin County Home Care Corporation, TRIAD, and other organizations and agencies are stepping forward to help advertise this opportunity, Deerfield Valley Heating and Cooling will donate time and materials toward the installation of the free furnace, and Lennox Industries is donating the furnace. Paul Voiland, a member of Montague's Energy Committee, made the connections to make this fabulous door prize possible. It's amazing that so many people and companies have stepped up so quickly to make this work."

To win the furnace, you must attend the workshop and be a resident of the Town of Montague (Turners Falls, Millers Falls, Lake Pleasant, Montague Center or Montague City). Along with the free furnace, all standard installation costs will be donated, except for the required building permit. There are some practical limitations on which buildings are compatible with this new furnace; most importantly, the new furnace can only replace an existing forced hot air furnace system. More detailed criteria for which buildings qualify will be spelled out at the workshop.

The workshop is free, open to the public, and will take place on Saturday, December 6, at the Montague Senior Center, from 10 a.m. to noon, at 62 Fifth Street, in Turners Falls. It is co-sponsored by the Montague Energy Committee and the Franklin County Home Care Corporation. For more information, please call 367-9304.

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News Release
For More Information, Contact:
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March 3, 2009
For Immediate Release

Energy Audit Makes for a Cozy Home

Montague, MA—Within a few hours, I felt the difference. I walked from my living room into the front hall, which is usually drafty and much cooler, and was shocked by how warm and cozy the hallway felt.

What brought about this welcome change? It all started with an energy audit through MassSave. I called them last summer, and, because energy prices were peaking and so was interest in the program, it took about three months to get an audit (the wait is now minimal, as demand for audits dropped with the drop in energy prices). The auditor walked through my home, with me in tow, and explained that extensive air holes in my walls and ceilings were letting in cold air in the winter. The small spaces along the basement sill, around pipes and wires in external walls, surrounding light fixtures in my basement ceiling, and in open wall spaces from the first floor to the attic were allowing heated air to escape through the attic and be replaced with cold outside air. Think of a hole-riddled house as a chimney with the hot air rising out the top being replaced by cold air pulled in from the bottom. The auditor also suggested insulating the attics (I have two), along with the necessary venting.

So, following the audit, I had all those holes in my house air sealed. The Center for Ecological Technology, the nonprofit running the audit program, spent many hours in my basement and attic spraying foam air sealant into cracks. They also applied a putty-like sealant called mastic on my heating ducts to keep the heat from escaping the ducts as it's being distributed through the house. Because they didn't have time to install them, they left me with a door sweep to keep drafts from seeping in under the door and some weather-stripping for the door to the basement.

After sealing up those gaps, the house felt a bit more comfortable, though I didn't experience the drastic improvement (yet) that others who've been through the process profess to seeing after having their houses air sealed.

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The last step was installing the attic vents and insulation. That happened last week, and that's when I noticed the huge difference in how my house felt. I can best describe it as changing from wearing a loose-knit cotton sweater to a tight-knit wool sweater. That night after the insulation went in, I was thrilled to experience my home not as the drafty old house that lets heat escape as soon as heat fills a room, but instead the warm, heat-holding, snug space that envelops me like a wool blanket (despite the single digit temperatures that night!).

Since that home-transforming day, I've been able to lower my thermostat one to several degrees (not because the outside temperatures went up; in fact, it's been very cold) and feel even warmer than before. And it was all done at 25% of the cost! I'll be paying approximately $300 for about $1,200 of work. The MassSave program will pay 75% up to $2,000 of the total cost of energy efficiency measures that they install.

Needless to say, I would highly recommend that my neighbors and friends take advantage of the MassSave energy audit program. The Montague Energy Committee is holding two workshops about saving energy in your home. The workshops will also explain the energy audit process, and participants can sign up to be called by MassSave to schedule an audit. After the workshops, energy committee members will make themselves available to help guide neighbors through the audit process.

The workshops will take place on Saturday, March 14, 12:45 PM to 3 PM at the Maezumi Institute, 177 Ripley Road, just off North Leverett Road, and Saturday, March 21, from 9:45 AM until noon, at the Montague Center Library on the commons. Residents are welcome to come to either workshop.

If you're not able to come to a workshop, you can contact the MassSave energy audit program directly to schedule an audit: 866-527-7283. More information on the program is available at their website: http://www.masssave.com/customers/. On the website, they refer to energy audits as "Home Energy Assessments".

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Planting the Seed for Energy Savings

As the temperature outside slowly warms up (read: when will spring ever get here?), you may not think it's the time to have an energy audit and consider installing insulation and other energy saving items. However, since May is typically the slowest month for MassSave's energy audit work, you'll get a jump on others for the next heating season by calling for an audit now.

And, while you may think tightening up your house is only helpful for reducing heating bills, sealing up the air leaks and adding insulation to your house will also lower your air conditioning needs this summer. For example,

better air sealing and more insulation in your attic will keep the heat that builds up in the attic from coming down into other parts of your home.

Planting trees and shrubs is another way to cut down on your cooling bill this summer; moist, early spring weather is an ideal time for planting. According to the book, Landscaping that Saves Energy & Money, by Ruth S. Foster, "One mature tree...provides as much cooling as fifteen room-size air conditioners."

The best place to start planting is on the south and west sides of your home. On the south side, plant only deciduous trees that grow tall. While their shade will cool your house in the summer, in the winter their leaves will fall and let in the winter sun (you can lose about 25% of the heat generated from low winter sun from the shade of low branches, which is why *tall* deciduous trees are best for the south side). Remember to imagine the mature size of whatever you plant, to leave enough space for the tree or shrub to spread its roots and branches without getting too close to the house.

Since sun from the west has little heating affect on your home during winter but a lot during the summer months, plant either deciduous or evergreen plants on the west. You also might look at where your air conditioner is located and plant a shrub or tree to shade it. By providing your air conditioner with shade you can save as much as 10% on your air conditioner energy costs.
And for added winter warmth, planting evergreens to the north and northwest protects your home from cold winter winds.

For a source of low-maintenance, plants native to our area, check out Nasami Farm in Whately. Their website is http://www.newfs.org/visit/nasami-farm, and their telephone number is 413-397-9922. Spring and summer hours are April 16 through June 14, Thursdays through Sundays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you'd like to get a jump on your neighbors for energy saving work on your home, call MassSave at 866-527-7283 and take advantage of their 75% subsidies up to $2,000! More information is online at www.MassSave.com.

News Release
For More Information, Contact:
Sally Pick, member, Montague Energy Committee, 413-367-0082, SJP@crocker.com
April 20, 2009
For Immediate Release

Let There Be (Efficient) Light!

Montague, MA—April 20, 2009—

We've all been inundated with the advice to replace inefficient incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), which last much longer and use much less electricity, so I won't go down that well-worn path. However, I'll try to shed some light on additional information on CFLs and lighting tips that I hope you'll find helpful and new.

CFLs now come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and color shades to fit your lighting needs. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star website provides details of the many options available

(http://www.energystar.gov). Here is an overview on CFLs and a newer, up-and-coming lighting technology, LEDs:

- If you have an energy audit, you're eligible for free *dimmable* compact fluorescent bulbs along with regular CFLs. These are generally more expensive than non-dimmable CFLs. I replaced most of my lighting in dimmable, recessed cans with dimmable compact fluorescents (I already had CFLs in most other lamps). I recommend that you test them out in your fixtures to see how well the dimmer works with the bulbs and how you like the light. In a few places, I stuck with non-CFLs because I didn't like the light in that space. As a compromise, I keep the bulbs dimmed as low as possible and turn them off when I leave the room.

- CFLs come in three-way bulbs.

- For CFLs, quality matters. Inexpensive CFLs may fade quickly. It's worth checking the Energy Star website (http://www.energystar.gov) for a list of *qualified* CFLs. The lighting section of that website also gives information on how much light CFLs produce in comparison to incandescent bulbs.

- Many compact fluorescent bulbs now function fine at low temperatures, so you can replace your outdoor incandescent bulbs as long as they're not directly exposed to moisture. Make sure the bulbs you use are designed for cold temperatures. If you use a motion detector to turn on outdoor lights (a really great idea because it allows you to have lights come on only when you need them), look for CFLs that are compatible with motion sensors. Not all of them are. That said, the CFL that I use doesn't specify that it's compatible, but it works.

- If you have torchiere fixtures with halogen bulbs, you may want to consider replacing them with compact fluorescent torchieres. The compact fluorescent fixtures use 60% to 80% less energy, can produce more light, and are not the fire risk that halogen torchieres are because of the high temperatures reached by halogen bulbs.

- CFLs give off light but very little heat. In the summer, lighting with CFLs helps keep your rooms cool. If you stay with incandescent bulbs, which give off a fair amount of heat (remember, they're hot to the touch), your air conditioner will be cooling down air heated by your light bulbs, along with summer's outdoor heat. CFLs won't demand that additional cooling.

- Unlike old CFLs, newer CFLs don't take a lot of energy to turn on. In fact, energy experts now recommend that if a CFL is not going to be used for five minutes or more, it's best to turn it off. Even

though CFLs are much more efficient than incandescent bulbs, the energy they burn does add up if left on. Walk through your house and count how many light bulbs are turned on in empty rooms; those are all burning electricity that adds up. I've always wondered why people turn water off when they are not at the sink but leave lights on when they leave a room. In both cases, if you are not there to use them, you are wasting these resources.

- It's reasonable to be concerned about mercury in CFLs. Here's what the Energy Star website says on the topic: "Because CFLs use less electricity than traditional light bulbs, they reduce demand for electricity; that reduction means less mercury is emitted from power plants. CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury — an average of 4 milligrams in each bulb. No mercury is released when the bulbs are intact or in use." If a bulb breaks, open windows in that room and leave the room for at least 15 minutes. Additional cleanup instructions are available at the Energy Star website on the lighting pages. Contact the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District about disposal of the broken bulb.

  Because of the mercury in CFLs, it is important that they not be thrown into the trash but instead taken to a facility that will handle them properly. Aubuchon Hardware and Home Depot now offer free CFL recycling. The Montague transfer station accepts them for a small fee. You can also bring them to the household hazardous waste collection day.

- LED or light-emitting diode lights are even more efficient than CFLs and don't have mercury in them. Their current lighting technology is good for flashlights, lanterns, colored accent lighting, indoor and outdoor spotlights, and decorative light strings. You can Google LED lighting to find out what's coming onto the market. More and more, you see LED flashlights in stores because they are so energy efficient; batteries in LED flashlights last a long time. The Greenfield Solar Store sells LED flashlights and lanterns. LED decorative light strings are also becoming readily available. According to Energy Star, LED light strings use 75% less energy than conventional light strings, and, if all conventional light strings sold this year were replaced with LED, Energy Star qualified strings, the U.S. "would save over 2 billion kWh per year and reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to nearly 300,000 cars!"

  LED lighting is expected to be the up and coming efficient lighting, but at the moment it has limited uses and is not well suited for general, diffuse lighting needs typical to the standard light bulb. I use a low-light, accent LED bulb shaped like a small, "normal" incandescent, as background lighting when I watch TV and to keep my living room gently lit at night. OK, I admit it's not the brightest bulb. It's more like the light of a large candle, but. it burns only 2 watts! I bought it for $15 at www.crane.com.

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News Release
For More Information, Contact:
Sally Pick, member, Montague Energy Committee, 413-367-0082, SJP@crocker.com
May 5, 2009
For Immediate Release

It's Spring and Sealing is in the Air

Montague, MA—April 20, 2009—Now that we're starting to feel warmer spring breezes, I've got the urge for sealing; let me explain. While the MassSave energy audit program was able to caulk, spray foam, and weatherstrip a great deal of my home's air leaks, their full day of air sealing still left my 153 year old house with plenty of air leaks remaining to be sealed (This is a reflection of the age and extensive draftiness of my home, not oversights on the part of MassSave, though I wish the program had allowed for enough time to complete the air sealing process).

Call me an eco-nerd (I'll take it as a complement), but, with the outside temperatures going up, I think of how easily caulk flows in warm weather. I daydream about having/taking the time to caulk, install a door sweep on my side door, and stick v-stripping along the frame of the door to my basement. In fact, a friend and fellow eco-nerd and I have talked about doing caulking exchanges, where we spend time at each other's home caulking above and below window frames, in cracks along the window sills, and where the floor meets the baseboards. I know that basement air seeps through that crack because my cat spends hours sniffing along the bottom of the baseboard in the fall, when I hear the scurrying of mice in the basement. These are all places that the MassSave program recommends that I caulk. I'm hoping to seal up these remaining leaks because, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, air sealing can save a home as much as 10% on heating and cooling. To be clear, these are one-time tasks, not something you do annually, so, once I've sealed the leaks, I'm good to go for years.

If you see me around town, ask me if I've done any caulking or other air sealing yet. In case you do ask me, I just took out my tube of caulk and caulk gun. The old caulk needed replacing, which I did last weekend, so it's a start. Maybe others in Montague will join me, and the giant oozing sound of caulk being pushed from its cylinder will inspire us all to seal up those air leaks and enjoy a cooler, energy and money saving summer and a cozier, efficient heating season next fall and winter.

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News Release
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Sally Pick, member, Montague Energy Committee, 413-367-0082, SJP@crocker.com
May 5, 2009
For Immediate Release

The Giant Sucking Sound of Electric Vampire Loads

Montague, MA—May 12, 2009—The world of electronics and appliances plugged into your home is full of vampires and phantoms. It is indeed a scary place. You may think that you've turned off your television or that your microwave is not running, but, in fact, they are running on "stand-by" mode, sucking electricity like vampires who live on the grid, as they quietly perform functions such as running a clock or holding memory presets. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) states that, "In the average home, 75% of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off!" Time to get out the garlic and rid your home of electronic vampires.

Why bother being concerned about vampire loads? These small amounts of energy being drawn, also called phantom loads, may seem insignificant, but they add up over time. For example, let's say that you have 45 vampire watts of electricity feeding off of your power bill for a year. That adds up to almost 400-kilowatt hours, enough to operate a 21 cubic foot Energy Star refrigerator for 10 months! At the current WMECO rate of 17 cents a kilowatt, that takes $67 out of your wallet a year.

Sources of vampire loads include plugged in devices such as iPods, computers, printers, washers and dryers, battery chargers, and plug-in transformers such as those used for cordless phones. Much to my surprise, I recently read that dryers have a significant vampire load, so I've unplugged mine (I generally line dry my laundry, so I've been spending electricity and money on a dryer that's off but still leaking electricity).

Here are some examples of vampire loads being consumed in the typical home:

- Cable and satellite TV boxes are some of the worst offenders, demanding between 10 and 48 watts when "off."
- When a desktop computer is on and asleep, it typically uses 21 watts.
- The average wattage used by a laptop when plugged in but not charging is 4 watts.
- Cell phone chargers, if fully charged, still draw over 2 watts of electricity.

Let's look at an example of how all these watts add up. If you have a cable box with running on 29 watts per hour (taking the average), a laptop computer left plugged in but not charging for 15 hours a day, and a cell phone charger fully charged but plugged in 15 hours a day, you'd draw a total of 287 kilowatts a year. At the current rate of about 17 cents a kilowatt, that gives you a yearly electric bill of $49 for things that are

supposedly off and are not providing you with a service. I can certainly think of other things I'd rather spend that $49 on.

What you can do exorcise your home of these vampires and phantoms:

- The least expensive way to avoid these spooks is to unplug any appliance or electronic device not in use.
- Unplug cell phone and cordless phone type chargers if they're not charging (that is, plug-in transformers, those black boxes that you plug into the wall).
- The DOE recommends that you, "Turn off your personal computer when you're away from your PC for 20 minutes or more, and both the CPU and the monitor if you will be away for two hours or more." It used to be a problem to turn computers on and off frequently; this is no longer the case. Most computers have energy saving settings that you can set to turn your computer to sleep or off after a specified amount of time. Beware that screen savers use a fair amount of energy, so it's more efficient to set your computer on sleep mode instead, for when you take a break from being on your computer.
- Plug computers and peripherals like printers into a surge protector, and rid your computer systems of phantom loads by turning off the power strip when you're finished working on the computer. When you turn off the surge protector, all phantom loads are stopped in their tracks. I highly recommend that you *not* buy the most inexpensive power strip, which are known fire hazards; instead spend the extra $15 or so and get a safe surge protector.
- Another option for your computer is a product called a Smart Strip, which "monitors power consumption and can sense the difference between when computers and other devices are on or off. Upon figuring this out, it shuts off the power, eliminating the idle current drawn from them," according to Treehugger.com website.
- Plug TVs, DVD players, stereos and other electronics into a surge protector that you turn off when they're not playing.
- Buy Energy Star rated appliances (see http://www.energystar.gov), which have low phantom loads.
- And this tip for the tech-savvy, from the Green Home website: "If you're up for a whole house project, check out GreenSwitch, a wireless home energy control system that let's you cut off power to your various electronics quite easily." SmartHomes.com also offers similar products.

To find out how much electricity your electronics and appliances *actually* use, whether on or "off", borrow a Kill-a-Watt meter from the Leverett library (they have 2) to find out how many phantom watts your electronics and appliances are using when supposedly off. The Greenfield Solar Store sells them, if you want to get your own.

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News Release
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June 16, 2009
For Immediate Release

Donations to New England Wind Fund Can Offset CO2 from Travel

Montague, MA—

Planning a trip to San Francisco this summer? According to Google maps, it's 3,042 miles from Montague, if you follow their directions. In carbon dioxide terms, that translates to one pound of CO2 per mile traveled, driving or flying, or over 3,000 pounds of CO2 added to the atmosphere. You can offset that large carbon footprint, and perhaps some guilt, by making a donation to the New England Wind Fund.

Your donation will not only give financial support for the development of wind projects in New England, if you donate before June 30, the program will match your donation *twice*, once to clean energy projects in Montague and a second time to fund organizations serving low-income residents in the state.

Montague Selectperson, Pat Allen, and her husband, Mark, explain why they donate to the fund. "We like our creature comforts! But we are very concerned about our negative impact on the environment. One way we have tried to minimize that effect is by installing geo-thermal heating in our home and installing photovoltaic panels on our roof.

After taking the low-carbon diet workshop [to explore ways to reduce our carbon footprint], we realized we were okay - but not great... yet. We needed to tackle our biggest "weight gain" which is our air travel. We don't want to stop flying!

But we are going to mitigate our air mileage by donating to the New England Wind Fund. We have done this twice so far and this has helped offset our carbon footprint globally while generating money for Montague to decrease its carbon footprint locally.

We plan on contributing another $100 before June 30 to take advantage of the matching funds while they last and hopefully to gain access to the bonus plan so Montague can do even more."

So, back to your trip to San Francisco. A donation of $150 will generate 3,000-kilowatt hours of clean electricity and avoid 3,306 pounds of CO2, a bit more than that one-way trip to San Fran. You help avoid roughly 22 pounds of CO2 for every dollar you donate. For me to visit my relatives near Chicago, a $100

donation would just about cover a roundtrip flight or drive; if I had a business trip to Atlanta, I could help offset the CO2 generated by donating $75. $50 would almost be enough to avoid the equivalent miles to and from Washington, DC, to visit a friend. And $25 would cover my CO2 emissions to visit friends in Philly and back, unless I took the train, which would greatly reduce my CO2 footprint for the trip to 0.35 lbs of CO2 per mile or about 175 lbs of CO2 roundtrip versus one pound per mile driving or flying, totaling 500 lbs.

Given that donations made by June 30 will be matched with funds for energy projects in Montague, now would be the best time to contribute to ensure that your donation also helps our community become more energy efficient. You might even want to think ahead and cover your C02 "costs" for two years of vacation travel.

If you make a donation by June 22, you will be eligible for a raffle prize (see article on June 22 raffle drawing for the Montague Clean Energy Campaign, at the Rendezvous). I think it's fair to say that donations to this fund are a win, win, win, and possibly win (raffle prizes) situation.

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News Release
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June 30, 2009, For Immediate Release

Tour Offers Look at 1st Prize Winner of MA Zero Energy Challenge in Montague

Montague, MA—June 23, 2009 Aside from the solar panels covering its roof, Tina Clarke and Doug Stephens' 1,152 square foot, 3 bedroom home just off Greenfield Road in Montague City does not look out of the ordinary. Walk inside, and it appears to be a simple, cozy ranch-style home. It may surprise you, however, to learn that this home has just been declared the winner of the statewide energy efficiency pilot program, the Zero Energy Challenge, for promoting "the use of advanced energy efficiency technologies" to homeowners, according to the website for the challenge. The home also features advanced energy efficient building techniques for builders to see and replicate.

To understand what distinguishes this prize-winning home from other new homes, you need to look a bit closer and talk with Bick Corsa, the builder, and the owners, Tina and Doug. You'll learn that the walls of the home are much wider than standard walls, allowing for extensive amounts of cellulose to be blown in, insulating the home from winter cold and summer heat. Above the ceiling is a deep layer of cellulose insulation equaling an R-value of 100. R-values reflect the ability of insulation to resist heat flow; the higher the R-value, the more heat the insulation holds in a home. Currently under the MassSave program, homeowners can have their attics insulated up to R-40 with a 75% subsidy for the cost.

The home also takes advantage of passive solar heat, collecting the warmth of the winter sun through a south-facing window and holding that heat in the concrete floor. In addition, the owners generate solar hot water and electricity with their extensive rooftop solar panels.

You can tour the home and talk with the builder and owners in more detail at their open house on Thursday, July 9, from 4 to 7 p.m. Heading from Turners Falls to Montague City on Montague City Road, turn left onto Greenfield Road just before the bridge. Look for signs for the tour one block up on Greenfield Road pointing you to turn left on Sherman Avenue, before the bike path. From Montague Center, take Greenfield Road; look for signs on the right at Sherman Avenue, shortly after the bike path and a block before Montague City Road.

That same night from 5 to 7 p.m., the third place winner of the Zero Energy Challenge, Wisdom Way Solar Village, will be showcased in an open house in Greenfield. These homes are located across from the Franklin County Fairgrounds. Go uphill past the Fairground's entrance and turn left onto Petty Plain Road. Solar Way, the entrance to the Wisdom Way Solar Village, is the first right on Petty Plain Road.

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News Release
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Sally Pick, member, Montague Energy Committee, 413-367-0082, SJP@crocker.com
August 3, 2009
For Immediate Release

Showcase Your Home's Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Features

Montague, MA—August 3, 2009—On October 3rd, the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) will hold its annual Green Buildings Open House throughout the northeast, and, this year, the Montague Energy Committee would like to feature green homes, office buildings, and town buildings in Montague, on this self-guided tour.

While the event will include buildings with the most obvious green features, such as solar hot water and solar electric (photovoltaic) systems, open houses will also include less visible features such as geothermal and air heat pumps, and energy-efficiency features. Some homes on the tour have used green building materials and practices such as increasing insulation, sealing air leaks, installing efficient lighting, using Forest Stewardship Council certified flooring, and using heat recovery ventilation. You can check out water-conservation techniques such as rain barrels and dual-flush toilets and talk to homeowners about how they create healthy, livable, and efficient home environments. You'll be able to see how the MassSave program sealed air leaks

throughout some homes and blew in deep cellulose insulation in attics. You can even tour an award-winning new home that produces more energy than it uses.

If you would like to participate in the NESEA Green Buildings Open House and be a part of the tour that features Montague's green buildings, please e-mail me at SJP@crocker.com or call 367-0082. The Montague Energy Committee will promote green open houses in Montague with stories in the media and fliers around town and can provide you with signage for your open house.

If you would rather sign up with NESEA and not be a part of the Montague-focused open house promotion, you can register directly at NESEA's webpage for the Green Buildings Open House: http://www.nesea.org/. Registration is due by September 1st, to allow NESEA time to put the information online, where people can look see what houses they want to tour, what green features they have, and where they are located. The criteria for what qualifies as a green building for the event can also be found on NESEA's website.

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News Release
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Sally Pick, member, Montague Energy Committee, 413-367-0082, SJP@crocker.com
November 3, 2009
For Immediate Release

Last Chance to Win New Furnace & Save on Weatherizing

Montague, MA—November 3, 2009—Time is running out for anyone wanting to qualify to win a brand new furnace being given away to one lucky winner who attends a free energy saving workshop in Montague, brought to you by the Montague Energy Committee.

The workshop, this Saturday, November 7 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., in Turners Falls, will be the last opportunity for both renters and homeowners/landlords to enter the drawing to win a new hot air furnace; the drawing will be held at the end of 2009. Deerfield Valley Heating and Cooling will donate time and materials toward the installation of the furnace, and Lennox Industries has donated the furnace. The new furnace can only replace an existing forced hot air furnace system. More detailed criteria for which buildings qualify will be spelled out at the workshop.

People coming to the workshop will find out how to save on energy bills this winter. Renters will learn inexpensive ways to make their apartment warmer and more energy efficient. Homeowners and landlords will hear about how to take advantage of the MassSave program, which offers up to $2,000 on insulating a building and sealing air leaks that make a building drafty. This program, in its current form, will end at the end of 2009, so now is the time to learn about it and sign up for a free energy efficiency assessment.

MassSave also offers a HEAT loan program that provides a 0% load of up to $15,000 for insulation, high efficiency heating systems, Energy Star windows and thermostats, and solar hot water systems. Holly Givens of Montague City raves about the HEAT loan. She says, “Lovin' my new windows--courtesy the HEAT loan via the free home energy audit--just in time for the winter, too! I have become a HEAT loan evangelist. (no fees, no interest for [up to 7] years--free money to make my home better--yea!”

The Montague Energy Committee is organizing the workshop, with the Brick House as community collaborators; the program will be held at the Brick House, at 24 Third Street in Turners Falls. The Massachusetts Municipal Association is sponsoring the event. For more information, call 367-0082 or e-mail SJP@crocker.com.

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